

WEEKLY WEDNESDAY UPDATE

The Weekly Wednesday Update is our newsletter which we email every Wednesday with oral health, health and policy updates from around the state and nationally.

To view past issues [click here](#).

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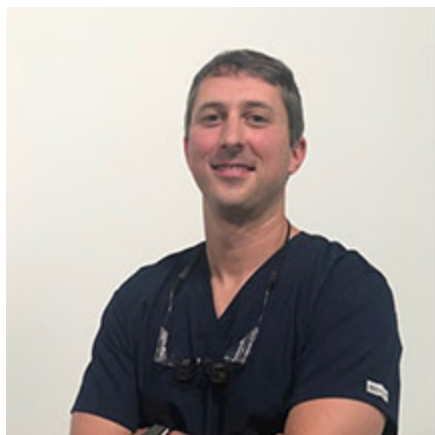
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[**Weekly
Wednesday
Update.**](#)

FREE Webinar with HRSA Chief Dental Officer

Dr. Adam Barefoot, DMD, MPH, is a dentist and a public health professional who has worked in various roles to improve oral health and reduce oral health disparities. He currently is the Chief Dental Officer at HRSA, the federal Health Resources and Services Administration and has experience working with public health district oral health programs to improve oral health disparities. This **Friday, October 13 over the lunch hour (12:00pm-1:00pm)** he will be



presenting about the stakeholders and resources involved in the public oral health community and will explore how collaboration among dental professionals, healthcare stakeholders, and community members fosters healthier communities and drives advancements in health outcomes. 1.0 CE will be available.

To register, click [here](#). A Zoom link will be sent to you this week.



Addressing Dental Care Needs in Rural and Underserved Areas

Accessing local and culturally appropriate dental care can be a significant challenge for individuals living in rural areas and marginalized communities. To address this issue, workforce options, such as diversifying students in dental and dental hygiene schools and establishing scholarship programs, are being explored. On October 27 at the [Conference on Oral Health](#), attendees will gain insights into the challenges faced

by these communities in accessing dental care and learn about innovative programs designed to empower dental professionals to overcome barriers and provide much-needed care in remote or underserved areas. Dr. Charles A. Abbick, III, DDS, Executive Director of Dental Services at Salina Family Healthcare along with UMKC School of Dentistry students will share their insights.

CE's will be available.

Fee: \$125 (\$20 student rate)

When: Friday, October 27

Click [here](#) to view the full schedule and register [here](#).

Where: University of Kansas Edwards Campus, 12600 Quivira Rd, Overland Park, KS 66213
Or join us virtually.



We're Hiring!

Oral Health Kansas is hiring a Community Engagement Specialist. This is a half-time position dedicated to supporting Oral Health Kansas' efforts to engage community members and organizations. The position is responsible for designing and carrying out community engagement projects including the Lived Experience Advisory Group and Brush Book Bed project. The Community Engagement Specialist will assist with special projects and provide guidance to the organization on policy strategy.

Click [here](#) to read the full job description.



Free Workshop Series

We're excited for this opportunity! Oral Health Kansas and the Pathways to Oral Health Team are proud to partner with the University of Kansas Medical Center and Aetna Better Health of Kansas to offer a new training series: Accessible Oral Health 2023: Building Confidence in Serving People with Disabilities.

This Project ECHO series will help dental teams learn more about people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, communication strategies, sensory awareness, as well as tools and resources for treating people with disabilities, although **you**

do not need to be a dental professional to attend! This series is not only a practice builder, but also a great opportunity for team building and education.

The series is available at lunchtime and is **free of charge**. Click [here](#) for more information.

Learn more and register through the [University of Kansas Medical Center](#) before spots fill up!

Contact Oral Health Kansas at info@oralhealthkansas.org with questions.



Sedation Dental Care Access Highlighted

Last week we reported that KDHE has released the Request for Proposals (RFP) for new Medicaid managed care contracts. Oral Health Kansas submitted several recommendations to KDHE as they developed the RFP. Some of these recommendations were based on the work of our Sedation Dental Care Task Force. While most people do not require any level of sedation in order to receive dental care, those who do need sedation face some of the most significant barriers in trying to access it. One of the biggest barriers is finding a dental office that can provide sedation dental care. Lack of up-to-date service availability has resulted in excessive strain on people who require sedation services and their caregivers to locate sedation dental care.

Oral Health Kansas recommended to KDHE that the Medicaid RFP include a requirement that the managed care organizations publish a list of their sedation providers in order to help monitor network adequacy and improve care coordination. We are pleased to see that the RFP includes a requirement that the managed care organizations publish a list of sedation dental providers. Creating a list of sedation providers is a major step forward in improving access to care for Kansans. We applaud KDHE for its leadership in making this a priority in the next five-year managed care contracts.

If you have any questions, reach out to us at info@oralhealthkansas.org.

GEHA. Read our Guest Editorial: Understanding Communities to Address Equitable Care

Thank you to John A. Johnson, MD, MBA, FACP, Chief Medical Officer of Government Employees Health Association (GEHA), for writing our first Guest Editorial.

October, Dental Hygiene Month, represents a unique time to highlight the importance of oral health care and the need to address oral health inequities in communities.

Dental health equity poses a multi-pronged challenge: there is a shortage of dentists and dental hygienists in general. Specifically, there is a growing gap in minority representation in these fields. Compounding this issue is that underrepresented communities often receive less dental care due to everyday factors like lack of access in communities.

As an industry, we must provide awareness and education of the resources available so that people can take control of their health. This means understanding the individual communities that we each serve. Through emphasizing resources and building trust with people in communities, we can provide the quality dental care that our members deserve.

At Government Employees Health Association (GEHA) – a nonprofit member association that provides medical and dental benefits to more than 2 million federal employees and retirees, military retirees and their respective families – we know that quality care requires an understanding of the member and the community that they live in. This includes understanding the perspectives, barriers and access limitations of those within underrepresented communities. In the past 18 months alone, to help provide more equitable oral health and dental hygiene care, GEHA and GEHA Solutions, Inc. (an indirect, wholly-owned subsidiary), has committed itself to supporting and diversifying the dental industry through:

- Initiating a relationship with the University of Missouri – Kansas City (UMKC) School of Dentistry to help provide more than 40 scholarships and pipeline fellowships to ensure that diverse individuals can continue their education in the dental health field. After committing \$370,000 to this project, the 2023-2024 incoming dental school class saw a 400% YOY increase in the number of historically underrepresented students.
- Supporting dental hygiene necessities by providing nearly 80,000 toothbrushes and toothbrush caps to veterans, unhoused, and historically underserved communities throughout America.
- Providing 100,000 in scholarships and continuing education funding with Browngirl, RDH (Registered Dental Hygienist).
- Contributing 20,000 mouthguards to Chiefs Flag Football, Powered by GEHA youth players. The mouthguards continue to be distributed to Kansas and Missouri gender-equitable sports programs and are a testament to the commitment to fostering a safe and inclusive environment for all.
- Expanding investments into the concept of “food as medicine” for historically underserved communities via neighborhood orchards and community gardens, and support for diet-treated health conditions. Our partners include The Giving Grove, Kansas City Community Gardens, and the Food Equality Initiative, knowing that food choices and access are important in minimizing tooth decay and creating quality oral health.

These efforts are making a difference in the community immediately and will have long-lasting impacts. To learn more about our programs, please visit geha.com



Check Out This Podcast About Rural Kansas

The Kansas Health Institute is excited to launch a new podcast called Health on the Plains. The podcast, also available as a webcast, is focused on rural health challenges and opportunities in Kansas, and the leaders and doers working to make communities healthier, more vibrant places to call home. Visit our website, khi.org/podcast.



Upcoming Events

- Course: An Introduction to Value-Based Care in Oral Health: Moving from Volume to Value, 1 CE. Click [here](#) for the course information.
- Self paced courses: [Providing Oral Health Care to Autistic Individuals](#) and [Caring for Individuals with Disabilities: Practical Considerations for Dental Providers](#).
- October 19: New training series: Accessible Oral Health 2023: Building Confidence in Serving People with Disabilities. Learn more and register through the [University of Kansas Medical Center](#).
- [Conference on Oral Health](#) - hybrid conference on Friday, October 27 at the KU Edwards Campus.
- **Webinar:** Community Engagement & Cross-Sector Collaboration Learning Community Registration, December 13. Click here: bit.ly/3L2Yz11



Oral Health Kansas' Executive Director Tanya Dorf Brunner has just been elected to the Board of Directors for the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB). She will



serve as the board's public member. Tanya is excited to work with this national organization and to share what she learns back home in Kansas.



Sugary Drink Display

We have Adult and Children's Sugary Drink Display's available for reservations. These displays are eye catching at exhibits, schools, library, dental offices, clinics and just about anywhere you see them!

We only have a limited amount so please sign up soon if you're interested in reserving one. Click [here](#) to learn more about sugary drink display reservations!

Follow Us



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